



Tips for Seeing the Big Picture: Outcomes and Evaluation

Hosting a **National Prevention Week (NPW)** event involves a lot of planning and attention to detail—from assessing your community’s needs and identifying partners to developing a media outreach strategy. With so many competing priorities, it can be easy to overlook one of the most important steps to consider up front for creating a successful prevention awareness event—evaluation.

WHY FOCUS ON OUTCOMES?

Setting your ultimate goals at the outset will help your organization or group plan an event that achieves meaningful short- and long-term outcomes. It’s important to identify the specific impact you hope to make in your community through your NPW event and develop a plan to reach that goal.

Does your organization plan to raise awareness of the dangers of illicit drug use among sixth and seventh grade students in the community? Does your local coalition intend to work with community leaders on changing local zoning ordinances related to the location and operation of alcohol outlets? Focusing on questions like this can help you to narrow your focus and enable you to choose and plan a type of event that moves you forward toward your intended outcomes.

HELPFUL RESOURCES AND SAMPLE EVALUATION TOOLS

Refer to the following resources and sample evaluation tools to develop the right materials to capture your event outcomes. Keep in mind that there are many existing tools that you can use and adapt to fit your evaluation needs.

- SAMHSA’s [Strategic Prevention Framework resources](#) and information about [evaluation](#)
- The National Institute on Drug Abuse’s Pre- and Post-[Student Survey on Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs](#)
- Cornell University’s [Designing an Effective Questionnaire](#)
- CDC’s Guide to [Developing an Effective Evaluation Plan](#)

GETTING STARTED

The central purpose of an evaluation is to measure how well your overall strategy works—which components work well and should be replicated, and which can be improved in the future. However, there is *no single correct approach to evaluation*.

Your evaluation approach will vary depending on the specific issue you hope to raise awareness of or address within your community, as well as the type of event you plan to host. Keep in mind the following three steps as you plan your evaluation:

1. Assess your needs and then define your goals and audiences.

The event you plan for NPW should help to address the needs and priorities within your community. It should also align with your community’s or organization’s prevention plan. Once you determine the goals of your event, your intended audience goes hand-in-hand. It’s helpful to articulate your community needs,

goals, and audiences from the outset so that there is a shared understanding of what you want to accomplish. For example:

- *Problem/need:* High school students are using prescription opioids to get high
- *Short-term goal:* Raise community awareness of the consequences and warning signs of prescription drug misuse
- *Long-term goal:* Reduce rates of prescription opioid misuse in the community
- *Primary target audience:* Youth
- *Secondary target audiences:* Parents, teachers, and school administrators

2. Establish realistic, quantifiable objectives.

With your needs, broader event goals, and audiences in mind, determine the measurable outcomes, or objectives, you hope to achieve. It's important to set realistic objectives. For example, if you plan to host a community sports tournament, objectives may include selecting peer leaders from among the high school players to lead short sessions on nutrition, illicit drugs, alcohol use, steroids, and other topics with summer sports leagues for middle-schoolers or during summer school. Alternatively, if you plan to host a behavioral health training session, objectives may include a 75 percent increase in topic-specific knowledge as measured through pre- and post-event surveys.

3. Determine what, when, and how you're measuring.

Brainstorm the most effective way both to meet your stated goals and objectives and to measure your success. Consider collecting information on:

- Participants' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors with respect to the prevention topic you are addressing;
- Attendance rates; and
- Levels of engagement as measured through social media interaction or media coverage.

These data can be collected in a variety of ways, including pre- and post-survey tools, focus groups, key informant interviews, "town hall" discussions, customer satisfaction surveys, and web analytics.

CHOOSING YOUR APPROACH

To guide your NPW evaluation planning, the following table outlines sample events and associated short-term outcomes and ways to measure them. When reviewing the table, consider which types of events would best meet your goals and objectives and the measurement tools you can use to showcase the great work you're doing.

Use this table as a starting point for brainstorming, but don't feel limited. When it comes to what a successful event looks like, the sky's the limit!

Type of Event	Short-Term Objective(s)/ Outcome(s)	Possible Measurement Approach
Staff Skills Training Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote staff wellness to XXX employees. ✓ Increase staff knowledge/ capacity related to behavioral health topics by XX percent. ✓ Increase staff knowledge/ capacity related to evidence-based prevention programs and strategies by XX percent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate total attendance. • Set wellness goals during session and administer follow-up survey to measure progress. • Administer pre- and post-survey of knowledge/skills. • Track staff participation/leadership in prevention programs and strategies.
Leadership Development Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote personal wellness to XXX individuals. ✓ Increase knowledge/ capacity related to leadership competencies by XX percent. ✓ Develop executable prevention leadership plans for each attendee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate total attendance. • Administer pre- and post-survey of knowledge/skills related to wellness. • Assess number of plans developed during session; administer follow-up survey to measure progress toward fulfilling steps outlined in the plans.
Video Contest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase awareness of a specific prevention topic (e.g., underage drinking, suicide, prescription opioid misuse) as evidenced by X,XXX+ combined web and social media user actions (e.g., web views/hits; social media comments, likes, shares). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure reach through number of video submissions. • Track views, ratings, and comments if video submissions are displayed on YouTube. • Track web hits/views if web assets are developed to promote the contest. • Track social media conversation about the contest.
Open House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase awareness of your organization and its mission among X,XXX individuals. ✓ Expand organizational partnerships by collaborating with three new partners in the community. ✓ Raise \$XX,XXX in funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess reach through attendance, number of individuals added to organizational email or mailing list. • Administer onsite feedback form/donation pledge cards. • Measure new partnerships developed and tangible results of those partnerships. • Tally funds and compare to pre-determined donations goal.

Type of Event	Short-Term Objective(s)/ Outcome(s)	Possible Measurement Approach
Health Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote wellness strategies and behavioral health resources to X,XXX individuals. ✓ Expand organizational partnerships by soliciting participation of three vendors/organizations to co-host the health fair. ✓ Increase public attention on prevention, as evidenced by XX media clippings and/or spots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure reach through number of participating vendors/organizations and event attendees. • Calculate materials distributed. • Solicit onsite feedback from participants. • Track and tally media coverage of event (e.g., TV and radio spots, print and online news clippings).
Community/School Pep Rally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inform X,XXX students about a specific behavioral health topic (e.g., underage drinking, prescription opioid misuse, mental health and wellness). ✓ Increase community engagement with your organization, as evidenced by XX new volunteer commitments. ✓ Develop at least one new partnership with a local school or community organization. ✓ Improve school climate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate total attendance. • Administer post-event survey to determine effectiveness in enhancing attendees' knowledge. • Solicit onsite feedback from participants. • Measure recruitment of future volunteers. • Measure number of new partnerships formed as a result of the event. • Measure school climate: for example, the degree to which students get along well with teachers, students respect each other, students believe there is a real school spirit, the teaching is good at school, teachers are interested in students, and teachers praise their efforts (data may be available from surveys already being conducted at the school).
Community Walk/Run/Bike Ride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase community engagement in healthy activities, as evidenced by attendance by XXX individuals. ✓ Increase community engagement with your organization, as evidenced by X,XXX views/hits to web content about NPW, and XXX+ combined social media user actions (e.g., comments, likes, shares). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate total attendance. • Measure recruitment of future volunteers. • Track and tally media coverage of event (TV and radio spots, print and online news clippings). • If web or social media assets are developed, track web hits/views

Type of Event	Short-Term Objective(s)/ Outcome(s)	Possible Measurement Approach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase community engagement with your organization, as evidenced by volunteer commitments. ✓ Raise \$XX,XXX in funds. ✓ Increase attachment to the community. 	<p>and social media activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tally funds and compare to pre-determined donations goal. • Measure attachment: for example, the degree to which participants feel close to people in the community, are happy to live in community, and feel like a part of the community.
Town Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Focus community attention on a specific behavioral health topic (e.g., underage drinking, suicide, marijuana use), as measured by XXX event attendees. ✓ Increase community engagement around the behavioral health issue, as evidenced by X,XXX+ combined social media user actions (e.g., views, web hits, comments, shares). ✓ Increase community attention on the behavioral health issue, as evidenced by XX media clippings and/or spots. ✓ Increase community engagement in prevention strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate total attendance. • Track results of event (e.g., new ideas proposed, next steps/further action established as a result of event, new partnerships formed). • Administer post-event survey to determine event effectiveness/knowledge gained. • If web or social media assets are developed, track web hits/views and social media activity. • Measure media coverage of event (e.g., TV and radio spots, print and online news clippings). • Track participation/commitment to follow-up actions.

SHARING YOUR EVENT OUTCOMES

Outcomes from your NPW event can serve many purposes. From contributing to healthier community-wide behavior over time to promoting your organization's successes to being able to cite successes and tangible outcomes when applying for grant funding, evaluation data can be used to demonstrate the impact of your organization's efforts.

- Consider the following ways to use your event outcomes:
- Develop a brief evaluation report for internal and external distribution.
- Present your findings in a PowerPoint presentation at local events, trainings, or conferences.
- Use key findings from your evaluation data to inform a local media campaign (e.g., infographic, posters, messaging).
- Develop a key outcomes "tips sheet" containing content that can be easily adapted for future reports, promotional materials, and grant applications.